

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 915
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, CH
SUBJECT: PRC PROTEST OVER ENTRY BY U.S. OFFICIAL INTO
PROSCRIBED AREA

1. FOLLOWING A CONVERSATION ON SEPARATE ISSUE WHICH I HAD AT FOREIGN MINISTRY OCT 31 WITH LIN P'ING, DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN AND OCEAN DEPT., HE SAID HE HAD ANOTHER MATTER TO TAKE UP WITH ME: NAMELY, ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN CHINA BY MR. TAYLOR, A CONSUL ASSIGNED TO THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG. (THIS WAS FSO JOHN J. TAYLOR, WHO VISITED USLO RECENTLY FOR CONSULTATIONS.) FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD BEEN TOLD BY PRC DEPARTMENT CONCERNED THAT MR. TAYLOR, WHO HAD APPLIED TO COME TO USLO PEKING ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS, HAD "UNLAWFULLY INTRUDED" INTO A MILITARY RESERVATION WHILE RIDING ON A BICYCLE. NEAR THE GATE OF THAT MILITARY AREAS WAS A CONSPICUOUS SIGN READING ".MILITARY AREA, NO ENTRY".
2. LIN THEN DECLARED THAT "THIS ACT OF MR. TAYLOR IS SOMETHING WE CANNOT TOLERATE, AND OUR DEPARTMENT CONCERNED HAS ALREADY SENT A WARNING TO MR. TAYLOR HIMSELF".
3. LIN SAID IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE USLO'S ESTABLISHMENT LAST APRIL IT HAD APPLIED FOR VISAS ON BEHALF OF NEARLY THIRTY OFFICIALS OF THE U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS OR FOR OTHER PURPOSES. THE CHINESE GOVT HAD
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PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO VISITING U.S. GOVT OFFICIALS AND HAD OFFERED CONVENIENCES TO THEM DURING THEIR VISIT TO PEKING OR OTHER PARTS OF CHINA. THE CHINESE BELIEVED THAT THE U.S. SIDE COULD WELL UNDERSTAND THIS GOOD-WILL GESTURE ON THE PART OF

THE CHINESE SIDE. IN THE PAST YEAR OR MORE, RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND THE U.S. HAD IMPROVED TO "SOME EXTENT", AND THEY THOUGHT OUR TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD WORK FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROCESS AND SHOULD NOT DO ANYTHING TO HINDER IT. NOR SHOULD EITHER SIDE DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH THE OTHER'S SOVEREIGNTY. LIN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RECURRENCE OF ACTS SUCH AS THAT OF MR. TAYLOR.

4. I TOLD LIN THAT I WAS THOROUGHLY IN ACCORD WITH HIM ON THE UNDESIRABILITY AND REPREHENSIBILITY OF ANY AMERICAN, OFFICIAL OR OTHERWISE, INTRUDING INTO A FORBIDDEN AREA. I WAS AWARE OF SITUATION AFFECTING MR. TAYLOR AND MY GUESS WAS THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THE SIGNS FORBIDDING ENTRY OR HAD NEGLECTED TO READ THEM. I WOULD ALSO DOUBT FROM MY KNOWLEDGE OF HIM THAT HE WAS MAKING OBSERVATIONS OF A MILITARY NATURE.

5. I AGREED WITH LIN P'ING THAT THE CHINESE GOVT HAD BEEN ENORMOUSLY HELPFUL AND COURTEOUS ABOUT FACILITATING AND AIDING AMERICANS, OFFICIAL OR OTHERWISE. WHEN OUR PEOPLE CAME TO PEKING WE TOLD THEM THAT THEY HAD TO BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL NOT TO VIOLATE ANY OF THE REGULATIONS WHICH ARE IN FORCE, EITHER IN PEKING OR ELSEWHERE IN CHINA. WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO, AND I HOPED THERE WOULD BE NO RECURRENCE OF ACTIONS SUCH AS THAT BY MR. TAYLOR. I SAID I WOULD PERSONNALLY CALL MR. TAYLOR'S ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER. I HAD NOT SEEN OR COMMUNICATED WITH HIM SINCE HE LEFT CHINA.

6. I THEN ASKED DC HOLDRIDGE, WHO WAS WITH ME, TO DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT AS WE HAD LEARNED OF IT FROM MR. TAYLOR. HOLDRIDGE DID SO, POINTING OUT THAT TAYLOR HAD BEEN RIDING HIS BICYCLE IN THE SOUTHEAST SECTION OF PEKING AND HAD TRIED TO CUT ACROSS WHAT APPEARED TO BE A VACANT LOT IN ORDER TO RETURN TO CHANG AN STREET IN THE CENTRAL PART OF THE CITY. HE HAD BEEN STOPPED BY A PLA SOLDIER WHO SAID AREA WAS OFF LIMITS AND WHO ASKED FOR HIS IDENTIFICATION. TAYLOR HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO PROCEED ON HIS WAY AFTER EXPLAINING THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN ANY SIGNS SAYING THE AREA WAS OFF LIMITS.
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HE HAD EXPLAINED THIS TO OFFICIALS OF THE CHINESE GOVT WHO HAD QUESTIONED HIM IN CANTON, AND HAD EXPRESSED HIS REGRETS.

7. I SAID TO LIN WE RECOGNIZED PERFECTLY THAT IGNORANCE OF THE LAW WAS NO EXCUSE. WE DID HAVE A PROBLEM, THOUGH, OVER FACT THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICAN OFFICIALS WANTED TO COME TO CHINA ON OFFICIAL VISITS AND WE WOULD BE CONTINUING TO ASK FOR VISAS.

8. LIN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR MY STATEMENT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RECURRENCE OF ACTIONS SUCH AS THAT BY MR. TAYLOR. AS FOR THE "REAL SITUATION" ABOUT MR. TAYLOR'S INTRUSION INTO A FORBIDDEN AREA, HE, LIN, HAD BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE MATTER

BY THE PEOPLE CONCERNED. PERHAPS MR. TAYLOR HAD FAILED TO MENTION THE EXISTENCE OF A SIGN, AND THIS HAD BEEN REFLECTED IN WHAT MR. HOLDRIDGE HAD JUST SAID; NEVERTHELESS, THERE HAD ACTUALLY BEEN A SIGN NEAR THE GATE WHICH WAS VERY CONSPICUOUS. MR. TAYLOR ALSO KNEW CHINESE AND COULD SPEAK IT VERY WELL. IT WAS VERY NATURAL FOR FOREIGNERS TRAVELING IN CHINA TO LOOK AROUND WHEN THEY CAME TO A NEW PLACE, AND THEREFORE IT WAS "NOT FULLY CONVINCING THAT MR. TAYLOR HAD NOT SEEN THE SIGN".

9. LIN REMARKED THAT THIS MATTER HAD OF COURSE NOW PASSED, AND THEY ONLY WANTED TO REMIND US AGAINST SUCH AN INCIDENT HAPPENING AGAIN. THEY DID THIS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT WE BOTH SHOULD RESPECT EACH OTHER'S SOVEREIGNTY, AND FOR THEIR PART THEY WELCOMED AMERICAN FRIENDS COMING TO CHINA FOR A VISIT. IT WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THIS THAT THEY HAD PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO THE U.S. SIDE IN THE CASES OF U.S. OFFICIALS FROM THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG OR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ASKING FOR VISAS.

10. I SAID I APPRECIATED LIN'S WORDS, AND APOLOGIZED FOR TAYLOR'S TRANSGRESSION. I WOULD TRY TO SEE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RECURRENCE BECAUSE THE CHINESE HAD BEEN SO HELPFUL IN ASSISTING AMERICAN VISITORS TO CHINA. HOWEVER, I COULD NOT PREVENT HUMAN BEINGS FROM BEING SUSCEPTIBLE TO ERROR FROM TIME TO TIME. I CONSIDERED LIN'S POSITION JUSTIFIED, AND WAS VERY SORRY THAT SUCH AN INCIDENT HAD TAKEN PLACE.

11. LIN CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT HE APPRECIATED MY REMARKS.
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12. COMMENT: HAVING LEARNED OF THE INCIDENT INVOLVING MR. TAYLOR BEFOREHAND, I WAS PREPARED TO DEAL WITH IT WHEN THE SUBJECT WAS RAISED BY LIN P'ING. FROM FACT THAT CHINESE AUTHORITIES IN CANTON WHO HAD QUESTIONED TAYLOR HAD APPARENTLY ACCEPTED HIS EXPLANATION, WE HAD HOPED THAT ISSUE WOULD NOT REACH US VIA THIS PARTICULAR CHANNEL. THE ATMOSPHERICS DURING THE MEETING WERE QUITE GOOD, AND IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE CHINESE INTEND TO HOLD BACK ON ISSUING VISAS TO U.S. OFFICIALS ON THE BASIS OF THIS EPISODE. PROTEST HAD RING OF BEING MADE FOR THE RECORD AND AT BEHEST OF ANOTHER PRC DEPARTMENT (IN THIS CASE, THE PLA). AT THE SAME TIME, IF THE CHINESE FOR ANY REASON WISH TO RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF VISAS ISSUED TO OFFICIALS IN OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG, THEY NOW HAVE A PRETEXT FOR DOING SO. THIS SITUATION ILLUSTRATES THE CARE WHICH WE HERE AND U.S. OFFICIALS VISITING US MUST EXERCISE IN SEEKING TO AVOID VIOLATIONS OF CHINESE REGULATIONS I HAVE RE-EMPHASIZED THIS POINT TO MEMBERS OF MY STAFF AND TRUST THAT APPROPRIATE STEPS WILL BE TAKEN IN CONCERNED U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OFFICES ELSEWHERE TO DO THE SAME.
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